



Town of Wake Forest

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Adult Flag Football Rules and Regulations

LEAGUE OBJECTIVE

To provide an organized softball league for citizens of the Wake Forest area in which participation and sportsmanship are the prime objectives.

ELIGIBILITY

- All teams must be registered with the Wake Forest Parks and Recreation Department, and ***all players must be at least 18 years old.***
- ***Team entry fees are \$300.00, and are due on or August 29, 2014, along with a completed team roster. Team rosters must include player name, complete address, telephone number, and signature***
- A team may have a maximum of fourteen (14) players on its roster. Players may be added/deleted until the team has played its first game.
- Any team using an ineligible player will forfeit all games in which the ineligible player participates.
- Players must be at least 18 years of age.
- All participating teams need jerseys. Any team participating in the league is required to furnish their own jerseys and will need to coordinate color with the league.
- 7 on 7, guaranteed 8 games with an end of season single elimination tournament.

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

A. Teams

1. Eligibility: Must be 18 years of age or older
2. Team Manager: The team manager is the official team representative. The manager will be the appointed offensive and defensive captain during the game.
3. Players and Spectators: A team is responsible for the behavior of its players and fans. The team manager will constantly strive to keep the team and fans from being unruly, verbally and/or physically abusive towards any other individual and/or behaving in an unsportsmanlike manner.
A referee may charge a team with an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, a gross unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, or a forfeit based on any undesirable behavior of that team's fans. A referee may eject any player or fan(s) from the facility. The person must leave the facility within two minutes or a forfeit will be charged against that team.
4. Insurance: The team manager will advise each player on his or her team that the CPSFFL/Town of Wake Forest PRCRD is not responsible for any accident that occurs

during participation in the Flag Football League and the league, or officials are not liable for any injury caused to an individual as a result of that individual's voluntary participation in any flag football event. The CPSFFL recommends that each team provide insurance coverage for its players as they see fit.

B. Players

1. CPSFFL is open to all persons / organizations meeting all requirements of and in good standing with CPSFFL/Town Of Wake Forest PRCRD
2. A player must be 18 years old by the team's first regular season game to be eligible to play.
3. A player may not play for more than one team in the same league unless permission has been granted by the league.

C. Roster

1. Roster information includes: each player's name, address, phone number, birth date and signature.
2. Rosters are limited to a maximum of fifteen (15) players.
3. Rosters must be filed with CPSFFL. A player is committed to a team when his signature appears on the roster. Teams may add or drop players thru the season as long as the new member is added to the roster before play begins

D. Equipment and Uniforms

1. Flagbelts

- a. The official CPSFFL flagbelt is the Triple Threat Flagbelt. Flags will be provided by CPSFFL for all games played.
- b. This flagbelt may never be altered or secured other than according to manufacturer's instructions. Any alterations to or improper securing of the flagbelt will be considered deliberate.
- c. The flagbelt must be worn only about the waist. The flags must hang loosely below the waist on each side and down the back of the player.
- d. The flags must sharply contrast with the color of the player's shorts/pants. It is not required that opponents wear different colored flags.
- e. The entire flagbelt assembly must be completely visible at all times. No part of the flagbelt may be obstructed, concealed, or covered by any part of the player's uniform or equipment.
- f. **Penalty:** Flagbelt Violation, 15 yards from previous spot, loss of down, player is ejected.

2. Jersey/Shirts/Top Coverings

- a. Each teams' players must wear like-colored, different numbered jerseys.
 - b. The jersey must be (either/or):
 - ...No lower than the Solar Plexus area. A jersey that is cut-off at the stomach, waist, or at or near the flagbelt is prohibited.
 - ...Kept tucked inside a player's pants/shorts at all times and may not "blouse out" over nor cover any part of the flagbelt.
 - c. The jersey cannot cover the flagbelt or interfere with the flag pull attempt.
 - d. A player whose jersey repeatedly comes out over the flagbelt during routine play must mend or wear the jersey in a way that stops this problem or that player will be penalized. A player whose jersey occasionally comes out during routine play or is pulled by an opponent will not be penalized, but may not participate until jersey problem is rectified according to above guidelines.
- Ruling:** If a jersey comes out over the flagbelt, the player may not participate until jersey problem is rectified according to above guidelines.

Penalty: Repeated or intentional, will result in Unsportsmanlike Conduct 15 yards. Player risks ejection after the first penalty. If the infraction is on the Ball Carrier, this will result in Flag Guarding 5 yards and the player risks ejection after the first penalty.

Ruling: A defender who, while attempting a legal flag pull, grabs, holds, or rips the part of the jersey that actually covers part of the flagbelt will not be penalized for holding.

e. Each player must check his uniform for possible jersey violations prior to the start of the game and before every play.

g. A player may wear any type of shirt or top covering (i.e. t-shirt, sweatshirt) under the game jersey as long it meets all uniform requirements. If an article of clothing has a hood, the hood must remain tucked into the shirt at all times.

3. Shorts/Pants

a. All players must wear pants/shorts that DO NOT have pockets (pockets can be taped), belts, belt loops, belt tunnels, strings, ties, or any other item that is deemed dangerous by the official. They may be made of any cloth material.

b. It is not required that team members wear matching or same colored pants/shorts.

c. It is not required that opposing teams wear different colored shorts.

4. Shoes

a. A player must wear either molded bottom cleats or soft bottom sneakers, tennis shoes, running shoes.

b. Shoes that have cleats that screw into a recessed hole on the sole are permitted.

c. Any shoe that has steel-tipped cleats or steel-reinforced toe or heel, or a square-toe is NOT permitted.

d. No player may compete shoeless.

5. Towels

a. A player may wear a hand towel tucked in the front part of the waist/flagbelt area. In this situation, the towel becomes a flag. A ball carrier whose towel is pulled by a defender is "tackled" at that spot.

b. A defender may, while attempting a legal flag pull, hold onto, grab, twist, etc., a ball carrier's towel without penalty.

c. A defender who tears apart or rips off any piece of a ball carrier's towel is credited with a "tackle" at that spot.

d. The offense may have a full-size towel in the huddle between downs. During plays, the towel may remain on the field ONLY if kept well behind the quarterback.

NOTE: The offense will be penalized if, during a play, the towel somehow negatively affects (i.e. trips, slips up, impedes, wraps up, etc.) any defender who is making an honest effort to rush, chase after/pursue, or "tackle" any offensive player.

e. The defense may have one full-size towel in the huddle between downs. The towel may not remain anywhere on the field during play.

6. Headwear

a. On the field a player may wear any type of cloth cap/hat. The player will be penalized if the cap/hat repeatedly falls off during play or if the player repeatedly knocks-off or discards the hat to the field during play.

b. A cap/hat of no other material than cloth may be worn on the field.

c. On the sidelines, a player may wear any type of cap/hat.

7. Jewelry

- a. NO jewelry may be worn with the exception of a medical and/or wedding band. A team warning will be issued at the pre game coin toss.
- b. Penalty: The 1st offense will result in a Delay of Game penalty and 5 yards. The 2nd offense will result in the offending player being removed for the remainder of the game. This does not constitute an ejection unless unsportsmanlike conduct accompanies the action.

8. Tape, Gloves, Bandages, Braces, Padding

- a. Tape and/or any type of bandage worn on the hand or a finger, not being used to protect an existing injury, is not permitted.
- b. Gloves are permitted.
- c. Ace bandages, "wet suit" rubber wraps, and similar materials are permitted.
- d. Any type of knee brace or knee support is permitted if all exposed metal is covered on both sides by some type of approved soft padding. No player may wear a pad, brace support, splint or any type of device that has exposed metal.
- e. Hard plastic surfaced or hard plastic reinforced pads or equipment are prohibited. Examples include: helmets, shoulder pads, thigh/forearm pads, etc.
- f. Any type of hard cast that covers any part of a player's arm, wrist, or hand is permitted if covered with approved padding.

9. Ball

- a. Each team must supply its own ball.
- b. Any leather/composite football that meets minimum size requirements of NCAA or NFL rules is permitted.

10. Penalty for uniform or equipment violations:

Before the game, officials will check all players for uniform or equipment violations. If violations are found, the player will be required to fix to conform to these regulations in order to be eligible to play. Failure to conform may result in ejection. The penalty for ANY equipment or uniform violation

...Unsportsmanlike Conduct: 15 yards from succeeding spot; the player risks ejection and team risks a forfeit after the first occurrence.

...Gross Unsportsmanlike Conduct: ½ distance to goal; player is ejected and team risks a forfeit, for repeated violations.

E. Officials

1. Certification

All officials are certified

2. Uniform

- a. Referees will wear approved clothing
 - ...Black & white striped shirt or Plain Black or Plain White
 - ...White socks without stripes
- b. A referee will have a whistle, a yellow penalty flag, a small note pad, a pen or pencil, ball markers, current rulebook and a coin for the coin toss to begin the game. Referees are expected to maintain a professional appearance at all times during the game.

3. Authority

The referees have authority over any and all aspects of a game. A referee's authority begins 15 minutes before the start of a game and ends 15 minutes after the completion of the game.

4. Jurisdiction

- a. A referee has jurisdiction in controlling player and spectator conduct and ensuring the good spirit of the game.

- b.** Therefore, the referee may eject a player, a non-playing coach or manager, or a spectator for constant or deliberate violations of the rules, indecent or abusive language, any unsportsmanlike behavior, or gross unsportsmanlike conduct.
- c....**An ejected player may remain on the sidelines unless directed by the referee to leave the facility.
- d....**An ejected non-playing coach or manager and/or any spectator must leave the facility.
- e....**The ejected individual has two minutes to do as directed by the referee or a forfeit will be charged against that individual's team.

5. Inspection of Field of Play

- a.** A referee will inspect the playing field and sidelines for irregularities and possible safety hazards. The referee will inform the supervisor or director of the league of any such irregularities or safety hazards before the game begins.

6. Accountability:

- a.** A referee is never obligated to discuss a rule interpretation or a specific game situation with anyone other than a team captain.

7. On-field Positions and Primary Responsibilities:

- a.** The Offensive Line Judge (OLJ) must line up only ON the sideline and EVEN with the offensive line. Since the CPSFFL does not use sideline sticks for down markers, the OLJ must serve as the scrimmage line marker.
 - ...At snap, watch for offsides, illegal motion, etc.
 - ...Watch snap back to QB; make sure clean catch.
 - ...Quickly look back to line of scrimmage; watch for illegal screen of rusher, illegal picks, offensive and defensive charging, holding, etc.
 - ...If double pass, watch for rusher intentionally pulling flag or interfering with QB going out for pass; determine if pass is backward or forward; determine if pass is caught.
 - ...If down field pass, the OLJ must watch rusher QB-HB action until all such action is over. Since the OLJ is the only referee in position to make the call, rusher/QB-HB action is his PRIMARY responsibility - all other responsibilities are secondary.
 - ...The OLJ must NOT follow the down field flight of the ball; or move from his position; or be concerned with making other calls until his primary responsibilities are over; then assist the sideline call.
- b.** The Defensive Line Judge (DLJ) must line up even with the defensive line ON the sidelines opposite the OLJ.
 - ...At snap, watch for encroachment, illegal screen of rusher, illegal picks, charging, holding.
 - ...DLJ is the only referee on his side of the field, therefore, DLJ has sole responsibility of making all calls along his side line.
 - ...May drift down field after snap but must stay ON sideline.
 - ...Assist on down field calls and, if possible, help out some double pass situations.
- c.** The Defensive Backfield Judge (DBJ) lines up 15 yards down field in middle of field at the snap of the ball. He should never let a receiver get behind him.
 - ...At snap, watch for illegal picks/screens, holding, pass interference, etc.
 - ..Responsible for ALL calls along end line.
 - ...Responsible for all down field action; should not let any play get past him.

...On plays near the end zone and on extra point plays, the DBJ lines up on the back line and the middle of the end zone. In this position, the DBJ has the best angle to make the call on any back of the end zone plays.

...Assist on all other calls whenever possible

- d. If two referees work a game, the OLJ should assume some of the DLJ responsibilities; the DLJ should assume all the DBJ responsibilities. The two referees line up ON the sidelines but on opposite sides of the field.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

A. Fundamentals

1. Centerpoint Sports Flag Football League (FFFL) flag football rules are comprised of rules from the NFL, NCAA, recreation and intramural programs, and variations of the basketball rules for screening and charging. Just as there are differences in rules interpretations between the NFL, the NCAA and Rec leagues, so there are differences in rule interpretations between those organizations and the CPSFFL. All rules and situations specifically covered in this rulebook are to be enforced as written, regardless of any other organization's rulings. Any rule or situation not specifically covered herein is to be administered according to the on field officials interpretations. Any other variations from this rulebook are not permitted.

2. Unsportsmanlike Foul

An unsportsmanlike foul, similar to a dead ball foul is always enforced from the succeeding spot since it does not affect either the success or failure of a play. It is not part of a double foul.

a. If a team commits a live ball foul and an unsportsmanlike foul during the same play, the unsportsmanlike foul is enforced from the succeeding spot as determined by the acceptance or the declination of the live ball foul.

b. If a penalty is accepted for an unsportsmanlike foul that occurs during the last timed down of a period, the foul is enforced from the succeeding spot to start the next period or OT period. The period is NOT extended by an untimed down.

c. If a team commits a live ball foul and its opponent commits an unsportsmanlike foul during the same play, the live ball foul is administered first then the unsportsmanlike foul is enforced.

3. Double Fouls

It is a double foul if BOTH teams commit fouls (other than unsportsmanlike) during the same live ball when:

a....There is no change of possession or

b....There is a change of possession and the team in final possession fouls PRIOR to final change of possession or

c....There is change of possession and the team's final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul.

In all 3 above, the penalties cancel, the down is replayed.

4. Clean Hands Rule:

If both teams foul during a down and there is a change of possession, the team last gaining possession keeps the ball if it fouls AFTER final change of possession and if it declines the penalty for its opponent's live ball foul (Clean Hands Rule).

- 5. If a team commits more than one live ball foul, only one foul may be enforced. If a team commits more than one live ball and one or more unsportsmanlike

fouls, only one live ball foul is enforced and all unsportsmanlike fouls are enforced.

6. If both teams commit one or more live ball fouls and either or both teams commit one or more unsportsmanlike fouls, all live ball fouls cancel, all unsportsmanlike fouls are enforced and the down is replayed.

7. Fouls During Scoring Plays:

a. If the defense fouls (other than an unsportsmanlike foul) during a play that results in a touchdown, the scoring team will not be assessed any additional penalty yardage.

b. If either team fouls after a touchdown but before the PAT attempt, the foul is enforced on the next live ball spot.

c. If the defense fouls (other than an unsportsmanlike foul) during a successful PAT, the offense may either keep the PAT and enforce the foul on the succeeding next live ball spot or it may accept the penalty yardage and replay the PAT attempt.

d. If the offense commits a foul during a PAT, that results in loss of down, the penalty yardage is not enforced.

8. Fouls in the End Zone:

a. Safety: If a foul is committed by the offense and is accepted by the defense and if the foul is enforced from on or behind the offense's goal line.

b. If a foul is committed by the defense from on or behind the offense's goal line and is accepted by the offense, it is enforced from the goal line and the ball is placed on the 1 yard line.

9. A penalty enforcement cannot take the ball more than half of the distance from the enforcement spot and the penalized team goal line.

10. Next down and distance is not determined until the ball becomes dead and after any acts (other than non-player or unsportsmanlike fouls) are assessed.

11. A team may accept a penalty to replay a down but, at the same time, decline the penalty yardage involved.

12. Unfair Acts:

a. No player or non-player may hinder play by an obviously unfair act that has no specific rule coverage.

b. No team may repeatedly commit fouls that halve the distance to the goal line.

c. No team may commit any act that tends to make a travesty of the game.

d. Penalty: Referee enforces any penalty including a score or a forfeit that is deemed appropriate.

13. All-But-One Principle:

Whenever the ball is live, all fouls are enforced from the basic spot with the exception of fouls by the offense. Fouls by the offense committed behind the basic spot are enforced from the spot of the foul.

Note: *This principle is used because it is always understood that a team is given the yardage it legally gains without the assistance of a foul. ALL levels of football, from pee-wee to professional, use the same fundamental principle for penalty enforcement.*

a. The BASIC SPOT for a foul during any part of a running play is the spot where the run ended.

b. The BASIC SPOT for a loose ball play is the previous spot (the spot where the ball was last snapped or free kicked).

- c. To properly enforce a live ball penalty, determine where the foul occurs, when the foul occurs and what kind of play occurs.

B. Game Basics

1. Playing Field:

Field is 100 yards long x 40 yards wide playing area which includes two - 10 yard end zones at each end. The playing area is divided into 20 yard sections by first down lines drawn across the width of the field with hash marks at the 3 yard and 7 yard line for extra points.

2. Playing Time:

- a. Two 20-minute halves, with 5 minutes between halves.
- b. The clock runs continuously during the game but it ALWAYS stops for a time-out, or an injury.
- c. During the last 2 minutes of either half, the clock ALWAYS stops for a time-out, an injury, any scoring play, a punt, a first down, a penalty, an incomplete pass, change of possession or out -of-bounds play.
- d. There will be 30 seconds between plays, beginning with the end of the previous play. This includes scoring plays. The interval between plays is 30 seconds when there is an action by the official such as a team time out, penalty assessment or official time out. The ready-for-play whistle will be blown on all plays.

****Penalty:** Delay of game 5 yards and repeat the down.

3. Stopping/Starting the Clock:

When a touchdown or safety is scored in the final 2 minutes, the clock stops immediately and does NOT run during the PAT. The clock remains stopped and does not start until the ball is:

- a. Snapped on ensuing play by offense.
- b. For a safety caught or muffed in playing area by the receiving team. However, the clock starts on the snap from the center if the freekick is fair-caught by the receiving team, downed by the kicking team, goes out-of-bounds, rolls through the end zone, or comes to a stop anywhere on the playing field without being touched by the receiving team.
- c. In punting situations, during the last 2 minutes of either half, when a delay of game penalty has been called against the punting team, the above procedure applies.
- d. During the last 2 minutes of either half:
 - ...If the clock stops for a first down, penalty or injury, it restarts on the referee's ready-for-play whistle.
 - ...If the clock stops for an out-of-bounds play, change of possession, incomplete pass or time-out, the clock restarts on the next center snap.

4. Timeout:

- a. Each team has two (2) 1-minute timeouts each half.
- b. Unused timeouts may not be carried over into the next half or into any overtime period.
- c. There is an automatic 1-minute timeout at the 2minute warning of either half.
- d. This timeout is considered an official's timeout and is not charged to either team.
- e. An official's timeout may never be called for equipment repair or to bring in a ball.

5. Forfeit time: In regular play, 5 min past game time is forfeit time.

6. First down:

A first down is gained when the offense moves the ball across the appropriate 20 yard marker in four or less legal downs.

7. Number of Players:

- a. A team fields a maximum of seven (7) players at a time.
- b. A team must field six (6) players to begin a game or to continue playing in any game.
- c. A team automatically forfeits when it can only field five (5) or less players at a time during any game in progress.

8. All team players, coaches, managers and fans on the sidelines must stay between the 20 yard lines.

9. Scoring:

- 6 points - Touchdown
- 2 points - Safety
- 2 points - Extra point (PAT) - a successful PAT from the 7 yard line
- 1 points - Extra point (PAT) - a successful PAT from the 3 yard line
- 2 points - PAT attempt is intercepted and returned for a score by the defensive team.
- a. **Extra Points** - Two-point conversions will be attempted from the 7 yard line. One-point conversions will be attempted from the 3 yard line. Teams will be able to alter their choice any time within the time between plays (25 seconds). Teams may also alter their choice if a penalty is assessed. The penalty is assessed from the spot at which the offensive team selects which PAT they are going to attempt.
- b. **Pass Interference** - If pass interference occurs in the end zone during a PAT attempt, the succeeding spot will be the 1 yard line if attempting for one point or the 6 yard line if attempting for two points.
- Example:** *A team attempts a one point conversion from the 3 yard line. During the play the defense commits a penalty. The offense may now decide to go for the two point conversion from the 3 yard line (half the distance penalty), the 1 yard line (pass interference penalty), the 7 yard line (accept the penalty - decline the yardage), or they can decide to go for a one point conversion from the 1 yard line (half the distance penalty), the 3 yard line (accept the penalty - decline the yardage) or from the 1 yard line (pass interference penalty).*

10. 17 Point Rule:

When a team leads by 17 or more points at or anytime after the two-minute warning of the second half, the game ends immediately and that team automatically wins.

11. Overtime:

- a. A coin toss determines possession.
- b. The captain of the team in possession of the ball at the end of regulation calls the coin toss. The winner has a choice of offense or defense or to defend a goal.
- c. Offense puts ball in play from the defense 20 yard line and has four downs to score. Touchdowns, PAT, and safeties count as usual.
- d. Change of possession occurs when the offense scores a TD and tries a PAT or turns the ball over on downs or if it throws an interception. The defense may not advance an interception; the ball is dead.
- e. After the offense ends its possession, the team on defense gets possession and puts the ball in play from same 20 yard line. There is not an extra benefit if a team scores in fewer downs than the other.

- f. ALL penalties are enforced as usual including loss of down and automatic first down penalties.
- g. Each team has only ONE time-out per OT period.
- H. Unused time-outs from the second half or a previous OT period may not be carried over.
- i. There is no time limit in the OT procedure; however, the offense has the usual 25 seconds from the ready-to-play whistle to put the ball in play in order to avoid a 5-yard delay of game penalty.
- J. If the score is tied after the first OT, the loser of first OT coin toss gets choice of offense or defense or to defend a goal and the second OT period then begins.
- K. The OT procedure continues in like fashion through as many periods that are needed to break the tie.

Examples of Overtime Situations:

- a. *Score is tied 20-20 at end of regulation; Team A has first possession and scores on 2nd down and makes PAT; Team B scores on its 4th down and makes PAT. Result: Score is 27-27 and game goes into 2nd OT period. Team B gets choice of offense/defense/choice of goals. If Team B (on offense) scores and misses its PAT and Team A throws an interception, the game is over and Team B wins 33-27 in double OT.*
- b. *Score is tied 20-20. Team A (on offense first) scores a TD and makes it's PAT; Team B scores and makes a two point PAT. However, during the PAT play, Team B is called for flag guarding at the two yard line. Result: Since all penalties are enforced as usual and since the penalty for flag guarding is 5 yards from POI and down counts, Team B's two point PAT is not allowed and Team B does not get another try. Team A wins 27-26.*

C. Kick-offs

- 1. There are no kick-offs.
- 2. Coin toss precedes the game. The winner of the toss has choice to defend a goal, to play offense, to play defense, or to defer choice of options to second half. If the choice is to defer, the loser of the toss has choice to defend a goal or to receive the ball at their 10 yardline.
- 3. **Ball Placement:** The receiving team will have the ball placed at their 10 at the start of each half and after each score.

D. Offense

- 1. All offensive players must be within 20 yards of the ball by ready- for –play whistle.
- 2. A team may run a “no huddle” offense and does not need to notify officials or opponents that they are doing so.
- 3. The offense may have any number of players on the LOS when the ball is snapped. No player on the LOS may simulate any action that would cause any defensive encroachment at the time of the snap.
 - ** **Penalty:** (for simulating action): play is dead; 5 yards; same down.
- 4. The offense may intentionally spike the ball to stop the clock but, may not do so to avoid a sack.
 - ** **Penalty:** Intentional Grounding- 5 yards point of infraction loss of down.
- 5. Any number of players may move, shift, or go in motion prior to the snap. However, all players except one must be in a non-moving set position for a least one second prior to snap. The one player in motion at the snap of the ball must be at least one yard from the LOS and the motion must be parallel to or away from the LOS.

**** Penalty (for all above):** play continues; 5 yards; same down.

6. All snaps must begin with the ball on the ground and either between the center's legs or to his side. A snap that hits the ground (bad snap) once it has been snapped is dead at the spot where the ball first hits. A snap not starting in the proper position will result in a replay of the down. A bad snap never stops the clock. The center may receive a hand-off if the center is at least one yard behind the LOS when the hand-off is made. All snaps must occur within 5 yards of the center of the field.

7. Passes:

- a. Unlimited number of forward passes, and/or forward hand-offs are permitted behind LOS.
- b. Once the ball crosses the LOS, it may not be passed, or handed -off in a forward direction from anywhere on the field.
- c. Unlimited number of legal laterals, pitches, and hand-offs are permitted anywhere on the field.
- d. No player, with or without the ball, may cross over the LOS, come back behind LOS, and then throw a forward pass.

**** Penalty (for all above):** play continues; 5 yards; next down.

8. Eligible Receivers:

All offensive players are eligible receivers. Two or more offensive players may consecutively touch a ball that is legally passed, pitched, lateraled or handed-off.

9. In-bounds:

A player must land with FIRST foot in-bounds for a legal catch; a player who straddles or touches a sideline or end line at time of the catch is out-of-bounds. A player who dives and makes a catch must make first contact in-bounds with any body part for a legal catch.

10. Ground Catch:

A player who kneels (one or both knees), sits or is laying down on the field may legally catch a ball as long as no body part is out-of-bounds. The ball would be dead at the spot of catch.

11. Illegal Participation:

An offensive player who voluntarily or accidentally steps out-of-bounds may not touch or catch a pass or participate at all in the play.

**** Penalty:** Illegal Participation; play continues; 5 yards LOS; next down.

NOTE: A player who is forced out-of-bounds may return in-bounds to touch or catch a pass.

12. The Ball Carrier may not:

- a. ...Stiff arm, slap at, push away or duck head into any defender
- b. ...Shield flagbelt or flags in any manner
- c. ...Dive for extra yardage or into the endzone
- d. ...Jump to elude defender or over a defender
- e. ...Penalty (for all above): Play continues; 5 yards; from spot of infraction; next down.

13. A ball carrier who touches the ground with any body part other than a hand or foot is immediately down at that spot.

14. Offensive Charging:

Offensive charging occurs when an offensive player runs into any defensive player. A ball carrier must attempt to avoid contact with a defender.

****Penalty:** Play continues; 5yards; from spot of infraction, next down,

NOTE: *Accidental brushing/bumping and unavoidable contact is not considered as charging.*

15. Fumble:

A fumble or dropped ball that lands even with or behind a ball carrier is dead at the spot where it first hits the ground and belongs to the team that last had possession, unless:

- a. The ball lands on or behind that team's goal line

RULING: A safety would be charged.

- b. The ball lands on or behind the opponent's goal line

RULING: a touchback occurs, opponent's ball on its 20 yard line.

- c. The ball is fumbled on a 4th down play that does not result in a 1st down.

16. Forward Fumble/Muff:

A forward fumble and/or a forwardly dropped ball or a forwardly muffed ball that is not caught on the fly by an opponent is dead when it hits the ground. The ball is marked for play at the spot where the ball carrier lost control of the ball.

- 18.** A ball carrier may not intentionally throw, pitch, toss, etc. the ball out-of-bounds in an attempt to stop the clock inside the FINAL 2 min/ half.

**** Penalty:** Player is considered "tackled" at the spot, clock does not automatically stop; usual 2 minute procedure applies, no yardage penalty, next down.

19. Screen Blocking:

Screen blocking is permitted. The "block" must be STATIONARY and must be SET at least two running strides (2 yards) from an opponent. The "blocker" may not extend or stick-out a knee, hip, shoulder, leg or foot when "blocking". The "blocker" may not lean into or initiate contact with a defender. The arms must be kept straight down along the "blockers" body and the "blocker's" feet may only be in contact with the ground when "blocking".

- a. An offensive player may not run a pattern in front of or interfere in any way with the rusher (s) path to the ball.

- b. Moving screens and any other types of blocking are not permitted.

- c. For all short rush situations the center and any offensive player lined up within 2 yards of center may not move in any direction behind the LOS that impedes, interferes with or cuts off the rusher's direct line to the ball carrier.

**** Penalty for all above:** play continues; 5 yards from spot of infraction; next down.

E. Punts

- 1.** The offense must notify the referee of its decision to punt and complete the punt within the 25 seconds after the ready for play whistle.

**** Penalty:** Delay of game; ball is dead; 5 yards and repeat the punt

- 2.** Once the punt is announced, the offense lines up in any legal formation and waits for the referee's signal to begin the play. The center must legally snap the ball to the punter. No part of the punter's body may cross the line when punting. The punting team may not move down field until the punt is away. The defense may not rush the punt. Penalty (for all): ball is dead; 5 yards.

3. Inside final 2 minutes of each half, the clock is stopped immediately once the punt is announced.
4. The offense may not change its mind to punt after punt is declared
**** Penalty:** Delay of game; ball is dead; 5 yards and repeat the punt.
5. Quick kicks: Quick kicks are illegal.
**** Penalty:** Delay of game 5 yards and repeat the down.
6. **Downing a punt:**
Occurs if the receiving team doesn't touch the ball and is downed by the kicking team or touches the receiving team then the ball hits the ground.
Ball is placed at the spot of first touch
7. **Returning a punt:**
All rules regarding ball handling in Section III apply
8. Since the punting procedure in flag football differs greatly from that of all levels of tackle, the referees must ensure that team does not try to gain an unfair time advantage in punt situations. The referees have the option to:
 - a. ...stop or start the clock as appropriate
 - b. ...assess a delay of game penalty
 - c. ...assess an unsportsmanlike penalty or any combination of these options

F. Defense

1. **Restraining Line:**
The defensive restraining line is 3 yards in front of the ball. However, if the ball is less than 3 yards from a designed 1st down line or the defense's goal line, the restraining line is half of the distance between the ball and that line.
 - a. ...On a 1 point PAT, the 1 yard line is the defensive restraining line.
 - b. ...On a 2 point PAT, the 4 yard line is the defensive restraining line.
2. A defensive player may not lean over or cross the restraining line until the ball is snapped.
**** Penalty:** The play continues; 5 yards if accepted.
3. **Blocker:**
A defensive player
 - a. ...Must go around a legal screen blocker.
 - b. ...May use hands only to maintain balance while going around blocker.
 - c. ...May not push, pull, grab, initiate contact with a legal screen blocker or charge into a legal blocker.**** Penalty:** The play continues; 5 yards.
4. **Defensive Charging:**
A rusher who does NOT follow a direct line to the ball at the time of the snap may NOT cut diagonally in front of, collide with or interfere with an offensive player.
**** Penalty:** Defensive Charging; play continues; 5 yards, same down
5. **Roughing the Passer:**
A defender may not rough the passer, defined as when a defender makes any contact with the passer before, during, or after the actual pass attempt.
**** Penalty:**
With or without contact of ball -10 yards; automatic first down.
Avoidable, intentional, flagrant -15 yards; automatic first down.

6. A defender - under no circumstances - may not trip, "chuck", charge into or detain any player in any way

**** Penalty:** 5 yards. Referee may assess unnecessary roughness, unsportsmanlike penalty or any other penalty deemed appropriate.

7. Pass Interference:

Pass interference (defense) occurs only if the ball is in the air. If the ball is clearly uncatchable and the contact is not unsportsmanlike or unnecessary no penalty will be called.

**** Penalty:** automatic first down at POI

(Referee's Discretion) Pass interference cannot occur behind LOS.

8. Shielding –

Hindering an opponent's vision without making an attempt to catch, intercept or bat the ball is pass interference even though no contact was made.

**** Penalty:** Defensive - automatic first down at POI; if defensive in end zone automatic first down at one yard line. Offensive - 10 yards LOS; next down.

9. Interception:

A defender who intercepts in the end zone may either down or advance the ball. If flag is pulled in the end zone it is a touchback

10. Tackle:

A tackle is made when a defender detaches a ball carrier's flagbelt. The location of the ball determines where the ball is marked for the next play.

11. If a flagbelt is detached - but not cleanly pulled off - by a defender and does not fall to the ground for several yards, the ball is marked at the spot of the initial pull.

12. A defender may jump or dive to grab a flagbelt. Defenders may leave their feet for any reason as long as they do not initiate contact with an offensive player.

**** Penalty:** Referee may assess charging penalty, unnecessary roughness penalty, unsportsmanlike penalty or gross unsportsmanlike penalty for any aggressive contact, defense or offense.

13. A defender must one-hand touch anywhere to "tackle" a ball carrier who is not wearing a flagbelt.

14. A defender may not hold or grab any part of a ball carrier's body or uniform or detain a ball carrier by any physical contact when "tackling" except when CPSFFL Section II, D applies.

**** Penalty:** Play continues, 5 yards. Referee may opt to award TD.

15. Contact with the Ball Carrier:

A defender may not push or tackle a ball carrier.

**** Penalty** - Pushing; unsportsmanlike penalty or automatic 1st down.

NOTE: *In both situations, the referee has option to award TD (if deemed appropriate) and/or to eject defender.*

16. Stripping:

Once a ball carrier clearly has possession of the ball, the defender may not punch, hit or make a play for the ball.

**** Penalty:** Play continues; stripping - 10 yards; same down.

17. A defender may not detach the flagbelt off of any offensive player who clearly does not have possession of the ball.

**** Penalty:** Play continues; 5 yards from end of play; player risks being ejected if repeatedly commits foul.

18. Contact:

Contact by the defender against a receiver without the ball and before the ball is thrown will be penalized.

**** Penalty:** 5 yards and automatic 1st down.

G. Miscellaneous Rules and Regulations

1. Unsportsmanlike Fouls:

Unsportsmanlike fouls cover a variety of infractions. The unsportsmanlike foul also covers any action that tends to make a travesty of the game and also any regular or repeated penalty that is judged by the referee to be intentional or avoidable.

**** Penalty:** The minimum penalty yardage for any unsportsmanlike foul is 15 yards from the succeeding spot. However, the referee has the option to assess any amount of additional penalty yardage, to award a replay of the down, an automatic 1st down, TD, a forfeit, to eject any individual from the area or to combine any of these options.

The infractions below are penalized as unsportsmanlike fouls:

- a.** No player may verbally or physically taunt or threaten a referee or an opponent. This includes jeering at, pointing at, shaking a ball at, etc. any individual.
- b.** No individual may threaten to punch or to inflict bodily harm towards any individual.
- c.** No individual may use loud or excessive or profane language regardless if the language is directed at another individual or not.

NOTE: SEE PREVIOUS SECTIONS FOR OTHER UNSPORTSMANLIKE LIKE FOULS.

2. Profanity:

Teams will be warned before the game on the use of profanity.

- a.** Any profanity directed at a player, spectator, official or member of the tournament staff will, at a minimum, result in ejection from the rest of the game/tournament with NO exceptions. There may be additional action taken upon review of the Flag Football Committee.
- b.** Profanity that is not directed at anyone will be penalized as follows:

...1st and 2nd offense: 5 yard delay of game.

...After the second: 15 yard Unsportsmanlike Foul

The referee has the option to eject any player.

3. Gross Unsportsmanlike Fouls:

These cover any serious, abusive and/or flagrant infractions. These infractions include repeated penalties of any type. The referee has the option to assess an unsportsmanlike foul as a gross unsportsmanlike foul.

**** Penalty:** The minimum amount of penalty yardage will be half the distance to the goal plus an automatic 1st down and ejection of individual(s) involved.

The infractions below are penalized as gross unsportsmanlike fouls:

- a.** No individual may strike or inflict bodily harm to any other individual.
- b.** No player under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs may participate in any league or tournament game.
- c.** Any type of infraction as deemed appropriate by the referees.

4. Every player on the field must wear a properly secured flagbelt at the start of the play.

**** Penalty:** Play continues; 5 yards; illegal procedure.

5. Unlimited Substitution:

Permitted anytime the ball is not in play, but not after the huddle breaks. The huddle may only break with 7 players. If a no huddle offense is being run, all substitutions must be made prior to approaching the line of scrimmage.

**** Penalty:** Play continues; 5 yards; illegal procedure.

6. Inadvertent Quick Whistle:

When the referee blows the whistle before a play actually ends, the team in possession of the ball at the time of the quick whistle has the option of either keeping the yardage gained up to the point of the quick whistle or returning the ball to the previous spot and replaying the down.

a. In the event of a pass or of a kick that is in the air at the time of the quick whistle, the ball is dead and returned to the previous spot and the down is replayed.

b. The referee may award a touchdown if he judges that a ball carrier would have scored had the quick whistle not occurred.

7. Encroachment:

If the offense encroaches before the snap or if the punting team encroaches before the punt, the ball is dead immediately and a 5 yard penalty is assessed.

8. Punt Receiving:

If a defensive player makes an over-the-shoulder type catch of a punt inside the 5 yard line while running full speed towards the end zone and their momentum carries them into the end zone where the ball is downed, the ball would be placed at the spot of the catch. This would also be true if the player maintains possession of the ball but is carried out of bounds behind the goal line due to momentum. If in the above situation,

a. The player tries to run out of the end zone but is "tackled" in the end zone, the ball is still returned to the spot of the catch.

b. The player tries to run out of the end zone and crosses the goal line, the ball would be marked at the spot where the player would be "tackled".

c. The referees judge that the player's momentum did not carry him into the end zone but judge instead that the player could have avoided entering the end zone, a safety would be charged.

9. Contact:

Incidental, accidental and unavoidable contact occurs in flag football. The referees will use discretion in assessing fouls.

10. Force:

When a player's action causes the initial movement of the ball. The term force is used in connection with the goal line and the direction from the field of play into the end zone. By establishing the force that causes a ball to enter the end zone (where it is downed), it can be determined if the ball is to be marked for a touchback, a safety, or a touchdown, etc.

11. Protests:

A protest may only be filed to question a rule interpretation. A judgment call may never be protested. In tournament play, a protest call must be resolved as quickly as possible. A protest upheld well after the fact not

only results in the hassle of resuming the game in question sometime later in the tournament, but also causes a variety of logistical and operational problems (changing results, redoing draws, rescheduling or replaying games) throughout the rest of the tournament. In addition, the time available to complete a tournament is limited enough without having to allow for protest problems. Every reasonable effort to avoid a protest situation will be made by trying to settle a problem on the spot.

...The game will be stopped by an official's time-out.

...The protesting captain will state his case and will be prepared to show which rule supports his claim.

...The game referees will make their decision.

...If the protest is disallowed, the protesting captain's team will be charged with a time-out.

...If the captain accepted the game referee's decision and declines to file a protest, his team will be charged with a time-out to replace the official's time-out used to stop the game. If the team is out of time-outs, it would be charged with a delay of game penalty.

H. Rules Summary

a. Previous Spot: The spot where the ball was last snapped

b. Succeeding Spot: The spot where the ball is next snapped.

c. Tipped Ball: A receiver is down (tackled) when, upon catching the ball, his flagbelt is detached. A defender may pull the flag of an offensive receiver once initial contact with the ball occurs. A receiver who first tips the ball before maintaining possession is down where the flag pull occurred.

d. Spot of Foul: Whenever the ball is live, all fouls are enforced from the basic spot. Fouls committed by the offense behind the basic spot are enforced from the spot of the foul.

E. Basic Spot:

...**Loose Ball Play:** The basic spot on a loose ball play is the previous spot. A loose ball play includes all action from the time of the snap until a legally thrown ball is caught, intercepted or incomplete.

...The basic spot on a running play is the end of the run. A running play includes any run or scramble behind the LOS in which the ball carrier does not throw a pass or pitch; or beyond when beyond the LOS, any run and / or action during any part of a run after a catch of a pass or punt.

f. Punts: Any action before the catch is part of a loose ball play. Any action after the catch is part of a running play.

Penalties:

..**CHARGING, Defense Play** continues 5 yards, same down

..**CHARGING, Offense Play** continues 5 yards, loss of down

..**DELAY OF GAME** 5 yards, Replay Down

..**DIVING** Play continues 5 yards, loss of down

..**DUCKING HEAD INTO DEFENDER** Play continues 5 yards loss of down

..**ENCROACHMENT** Defense 5 yards (play is dead)

..**FLAG GUARDING** Play continues 5 yards, loss of down

- ..**GROSS UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOUL** ½ distance to goal succeeding spot - Auto ejection of individual
- ..**HOLDING, Defense (on ball carrier)** Play continues 5 yards, same down
- ..**ILLEGAL CONTACT, Defense (w/o ball)** Play continues 5 yards, LOS, automatic 1st
- ..**ILLEGAL MOTION** Play continues 5 yards
- ..**ILLEGAL PASS** Play continues 5 yards, loss of down
- ..**ILLEGAL PROCEDURE** Play continues 5 yards
- ..**ILLEGAL SCREEN** Play continues 5 yards, loss of down
- ..**OFFSIDES** Offense on kick-off or snap 5 yards (play is dead)
- ..**PASS INTERFERENCE, Defense** Play continues Auto 1st at spot of foul
- ..**PASS INTERFERENCE, Defense in end zone** Auto 1st at 1 yd line
- ..**PASS INTERFERENCE, Defense in end zone during PAT**
 - 1 Point Attempt– Ball spotted on 1 yard line, new attempt
 - 2 Point Attempt– Ball spotted on 4 yard line, new attempt
- ..**PASS INTERFERENCE, Offense** 10 yards, LOS, loss of down
- ..**ROUGHING THE PASSER** With or without touching ball 10 yards succeeding spot, automatic 1st
Flagrant - 15 yard succeeding spot, automatic first
- ..**STRIPPING** 10 yards from spot of foul
- ..**TACKLING** Play continues ½ distance to goal/auto 1st TD given at referee option
- ..**UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOUL** 15 yards Flagrant - 15 yards succeeding spot
- ..**UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS** Play continues 15 yards
Flagrant - Play Continues, 15 yards automatic 1st
- **NOTE:** *Referees have option to assess any penalty yardage, toward automatic 1st or TD or forfeit, to eject individual for any unnecessary roughness or unsportsmanlike foul or tackling.*